

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA:ALATHERTON,JR.:LAB

APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

P - MR. HABIB

S/S - JHOGANSON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 178824

NODIS

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, US

SUBJECT: YOUR RETURN FOR CONSULTATION

REF: DAMASCUS 4702

1. FYI: I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR YOU TO MAKE A QUICK TRIP TO WASHINGTON SO THAT WE CAN DISCUSS IN DEPTH THE CURRENT SYRIAN SCENE, INCLUDING LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN SOVIET-SYRIAN RELATIONS AND WHERE ASAD IS GOING WITH RESPECT TO LEBANON, PLO AND IN HIS RELATIONS WITH OTHER ARABS. IT SEEMS TO ME SYRIA COULD BE APPROACHING A PARTICULARLY CRITICAL PERIOD, AND I BELIEVE WE NEED TO EXPLORE ALL THE POSSIBLE RAMIFICATIONS TOGETHER. I RECOGNIZE THAT YOUR COMING BACK AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME COULD BE SUBJECTED TO A NUMBER OF INTERPRETATIONS, SOME HELPFUL AND SOME NOT SO HELPFUL, WITH RESPECT TO ASAD'S DIFFICULTY WITH THE SOVIETS, SYRIA'S LEBANON POLICY, ALLEGATIONS OF U.S.-SYRIAN COLLUSION IN LEBANON, ETC. I WOULD APPRECIATE ANY THOUGHTS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT PROS AND CONS OF YOUR COMING AT THIS TIME, BUT I AM INCLINED TO THINK THE ADVANTAGES OUTWEIGH WHATEVER DISADVANTAGES THERE MAY BE AND THAT LATTER WOULD BE

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MANAGEABLE. WE WOULD, OF COURSE, HANDLE YOUR CONSULTATIONS

IN LOWEST POSSIBLE KEY IN INFORMING SYRIANS AND IN
RESPONDING TO ANY PRESS QUERIES THERE MIGHT BE. SUBJECT
TO A FURTHER EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES BETWEEN US SHOULD YOU HAVE

RESERVATIONS, YOU SHOULD PLAN TO ARRIVE WASHINGTON THIS
WEEKEND, SO THAT WE COULD MEET ON MONDAY, THE 26TH, AND
YOU COULD THEN RETURN IMMEDIATELY TO DAMASCUS, THUS
MINIMIZING THE LENGTH OF TIME YOU ARE AWAY. END FYI.

2. YOU WILL, OF COURSE, WANT TO INFORM ASAD THAT I AM
CALLING YOU BACK ON CONSULTATIONS. YOU SHOULD SAY THAT
I HAVE ASKED YOU TO RETURN SO THAT WE CAN REVIEW TOGETHER
THE SITUATION IN LIGHT OF COMMUNICATIONS WE HAVE RECEIVED
FROM KING HUSSEIN ABOUT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING
SYRIA. YOU SHOULD GET ACROSS IN WHATEVER WAYS YOU
CONSIDER NECESSARY OUR STRONG INTEREST IN SEEING SYRIA
MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENT NATIONAL POLICY AND OUR SUPPORT
FOR POLITICAL SOLUTION SYRIA IS SEEKING TO BRING ABOUT IN
LEBANON. WE WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING FROM SYRIANS ANYTHING
THEY WANT TO CONVEY THROUGH YOU WHICH WE SHOULD BE
THINKING ABOUT. YOU SHOULD ASK TO SEE ASAD IF POSSIBLE
BEFORE YOUR DEPARTURE, BUT IN ANY CASE SHOULD CONVEY
FOREGOING TO HIM THROUGH WHATEVER CHANNEL YOU CONSIDER
MOST APPROPRIATE. YOU SHOULD ALSO SEE AS MANY OTHER KEY
SYRIANS AS YOU CAN--E.G., KHADDAM, SHIHABI AND ABU
HAYDAR--IN ORDER TO HAVE AS GOOD A FEEL AS POSSIBLE FOR
CURRENT SYRIAN MOOD AND THINKING, WITHOUT OF COURSE
MENTIONING HUSSEIN'S MESSAGE TO ANY OF THEM. KISSINGER

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